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## BASTIEN-LEPAGE.

BASTIEN-LEPAGE died in Paris on the tenth of December, after long suffering from an incurable disease.

Jules Bastien he was originally called—Lepage was the name of his mother. He was born at Damvilliers, in the department of the Meuse, in 1848. His father was a village cooper, and the family was by no means in easy circumstances. After receiving a simple schooling in Verdun, Jules Bastien became a post-office clerk; but he had already given proof of his artistic tastes, and, while working in the post-office at Paris, he drew hats and dresses for a fashion journal. Finally the town of Verdun voted him a pension of a few hundred francs a year, which enabled him to enter the École des Beaux Arts and the studio of M. Cabanel. In 1872 he competed for the Prix de Rome. The subject was the angel announcing to the shepherds of Bethlehem the birth of the Saviour. The young artist treated the subject in an artless and realistic manner. A very human-looking angel, clad in white, with a massive aureole, is seen talking to some rough men, dressed in skins of beasts, who open eyes of wonderment at the story. The work was remarkable, and, although its realism shocked some members of the academic jury, and caused strong division of opinion, its author would certainly have obtained the Grand Prix de Rome had not his only serious rival, M. Léon Comerre, attained the limit of age. The grand prize was therefore given to M. Comerre, and a second grand prix to Bastien-Lepage. In 1873 he exhibited at the Salon a picture of "Spring;" in 1874, the portrait of his grandfather, which brought him into notice as a realist and a masterly painter; in 1876, "La Communiant" and a portrait of M. Wallon; in 1877, a portrait and "Mes Parents;" in 1878, "Les Foins" and a portrait of M. André Theuriot; in 1879, "Potato Gathering" and a portrait of Sarah Bernhardt; in 1880, "Jeanne d'Arc" and portrait of M. Andrieux; in 1881, a "Beggar" and portrait of M. Albert Wolff; in 1882, a portrait and "Père Jacques;" in 1883, "The Village Lovers;" and in 1884, "The Forge," a work executed some years ago. Besides these pictures he painted many portraits, among others that of the Prince of Wales; and during a visit to London he made several studies, which were exhibited a few years ago in the gallery of the Rue de Sèze. In 1874 and 1875 he obtained respectively a third- and a second-class medal at the Salon; at the Exhibition of 1878 a third-class medal, and in 1879 the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

Bastien-Lepage has left portraits which are veritable masterpieces, especially that of M. Albert Wolff. His manner of painting is of extreme delicacy and fineness, erudite, careful and conscientious. His portraits have the sincerity and the perfect execution of some of the best work of the primitive Italian artists, and the patient observation of the Dutch masters. In his pictures of rustic life Bastien-Lepage was a realist without being a poet; he gave all the coarse and painful reality of peasant life, but without the grandeur, the poetry and the idealism of style which Millet put into his pictures. He had no imagination, as he showed notably in his "Jeanne d'Arc," the central figure of which is incomplete and vulgar in sentiment. He did not realize the fact that the character of reality and simplicity of position and attitude do not exclude poetry and even sublimity. Indeed, we can not recognize in Bastien-Lepage all the high qualities some of his enthusiastic French critics attribute to him; nor can we admit that he exercised an important influence on contemporary French painting. On the other hand, we are lost in admiration of his marvellous execution and of his precious qualities as a draughtsman and a colorist.

As a man, Bastien-Lepage lived a most exemplary life, devoted entirely to the love of his family and the love of his art. M. André Theuriot, his friend and countryman, has made an interesting study of him under the name of "Primitif," in his volume called "Sous Bois." Being accustomed to poverty from infancy, the young painter had no wants, and did not know what privation meant. Hence he was able from the beginning to demand high prices for his work. On this point he used to relate an anecdote. After the success of his "Communiant" at the Salon of 1876, M. Hayem, a Parisian amateur, came and asked the price. "Three hundred dollars," was the reply. The amateur hesitated and went away, to return six months afterward. "Now," said the artist, "the price is \$500, and next year it will be double." M. Hayem did not conclude the bargain, and shortly afterward

a Dutch amateur paid \$3600 for the picture. The Parisians praised Bastien-Lepage more liberally than they spent money on his pictures, and so he leaves in his studio his large Salon pictures, "Les Foins" and the "Potato Gatherer," together with several landscapes, water-colors and studies of all kinds.

There is to be an exhibition and sale, at the gallery in the Rue de Sèze, of the pictures and studies left by the artist. Mr. Erwin Davis, one of our most discriminating American collectors, who owns the "Joan of Arc"—well known to New York and Boston, and considered by many Bastien-Lepage's best work—has generously offered to send it to Paris and have it returned at his own expense. The Custom authorities, it is to be hoped, will see their way to permit Mr. Davis to re-import the picture without paying the barbarous thirty per cent duty a second time.

## My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?  
Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.  
Much Ado About Nothing.

**D**URING the past month there has been no lack of picture exhibitions. Indeed, what with the successive displays at the American Art Galleries, the "black-and-white" of the Salmagundians and the Artists' Fund Society at the Academy of Design, and the exhibitions at the Lotos and Union League Clubs, it cannot be said that the art interest in New York is on the wane. The Salmagundi exhibition was very creditable, the carping remarks of some newspaper critics to the contrary, notwithstanding. Can these gentlemen name any other city here, or in Europe, which makes such a good showing as this club does year after year? Fault is found that there is a great many book and magazine illustrations, the reproductions of which are familiar to the public; but how otherwise could the wall space be decently filled? Certainly, there is no considerable market for original works in monochrome. At a much-advertised black-and-white exhibition in the Egyptian Hall, in London, two or three years ago, there was hardly anything *but* book and magazine pictures; and I have not heard that the exhibition was successful enough to warrant repetitions of the kind.

AMONG the original works at the Salmagundi display may be noted Charles Osborne's figure of Orpheus, overwhelmed by the second loss of Eurydice—an excellent study from life; some old men's heads, by J. J. Hammer; delightful drawings of children's heads, by Lisa Stillman; a powerful charcoal study of fisher boats on a long ocean swell, by George W. Edwards; and head studies, by Mrs. Fowler, F. W. Freer, and Albert Abendshein. W. A. Coffin sent an attractive head of a girl, and "An August Night in New York," a clever bit of impressionism seized on the roof garden of the Casino. But I saw nothing more pleasing or more appropriate in such an exhibition than the simple pencil drawing, "The Law," a seated female figure, by J. Carroll Beckwith. This clever artist has so many admirers among the students that some of them, seeing what he can do with it, may be tempted to take up once more that good old-fashioned implement, the lead-pencil, which, in this country, is now so generally neglected in favor of the charcoal and the crayon, that there is some danger that it may, before long, become as obsolete as the silver-point of the old masters. Among the landscape contributors must be named Bruce Crane, R. C. Minor, Van Elten, Walter L. Palmer, W. H. Gibson, C. H. and C. W. Eaton, W. H. Gibson, and Mazzanovich, and among the marine artists, Harry Chase, J. C. Nicoll, and F. K. N. Rehn. An oddity in the hanging was the placing side by side the sheep of Monks, Volkmar, and Walker, to the decided advantage, be it said, of Mr. Monks. Mr. Volkmar's drawing is getting more and more mannered: his sheep here are flattened out as if they had just come from the press. Mr. Walker's sheep spoil a meritorious landscape.

AMONG the few pieces of sculpture, nothing was so much admired as the bronze bas-relief of a child with a hoop, lovingly modelled by his mother, Mary B. Alden. The lady was formerly a pupil of Louis St. Gaudens, and had that clever sculptor signed this charming panel himself it would do him no discredit. Mrs. Alden is

comparatively unknown as an exhibitor; but if she continues to produce such good work as this, her friends need have no anxiety as to her artistic future. It would be well, however, if she would follow somewhat less closely the methods—I was about to write mannerisms—of her master.

THE collection of paintings, sketches and studies at the galleries of the American Art Association, so far as the woman's share in it goes—and the share is considerable—is noticed in another part of the magazine. A separate article is devoted to Mr. Edwards and his exhibition, and the very interesting drawings by Elihu Vedder for Houghton, Mifflin & Co.'s sumptuously printed and illustrated "Omar Khayyam" were noticed when first exhibited in Boston. Among the pictures in oil there was nothing better than William Bliss Baker's unpretentious little canvas, "First Fall of Snow," a sunset in the woods, a delightfully frank bit of out-door painting. It was generally admired, and the artist may expect many commissions for similar pictures; but the fortunate owner of this fresh and truthful excerpt from nature may rest happy in the belief that, while Mr. Baker may equal this work, he will not surpass it.

"TWENTY MINUTES FOR REFRESHMENTS" is a capital Bavarian street scene, by Richard Koehler, showing a laborer and his wife enjoying together the noon-day meal. Moses Wight's "A Surprise" tells an amusing story of a good-looking artist caught by his wife in the act of kissing his pretty model. "Study of a Daisy" is the humorous title given by Thomas Hovenden to an excellent head of a grinning darkey youth—presumably the "daisy," although the double-entendre is maintained by a diminutive specimen of that flower in the lapel of his coat. A very good bit of genre, too, is J. G. Brown's "Short," a youthful vendor of bananas anxiously counting over some change in his hand. The boy is the familiar "street Arab" of the artist. I found Mr. Brown in his studio lately, affectionately touching up an old painting by him of an Italian street musician. He sighed; for those picturesque little models who used to shock the tympanum and arouse our compassion by their poor music and perfunctory capers are no longer seen in the city. The cruel padrone who import them have reason now to give New York a wide berth, and their wretched little slaves must sing and dance elsewhere. Leon and Percy Moran charm as usual by their graceful drawing and clever technique. This exhibition was weak in portraiture but strong in landscape, in which latter class of subject the work of Bruce Crane, J. F. Murphy, C. H. and C. W. Eaton, R. C. Minor, and the Smillies deserves particular mention. F. W. Kost, Mr. Macy's clever pupil, seems to have lost rather than gained in strength by his study abroad. Thomas Moran's "Off East Hampton, Long Island" is a masterly study of wave motion—"The floods raise up their voice; the floods raise high their breakers." In interesting contrast, the picture hangs next to "Crépuscule," Alexander Harrison's delightful marine painting noticed in these columns last month.

THE pictures painted for the Artists' Fund Society, and sold at the Academy of Design in the middle of January, showed a higher average of excellence than usual. Ernest Parton—who, by the way, is now in New York—was represented by some charmingly fresh bits of English woodland and meadow scenery; Winslow Homer by several vigorous sketches of English sea-coast life; Wordsworth Thompson had a variety of canvases of Oriental deserts and Bedouins, quite in the Fromentin vein, and Frank Fowler, without going to the East at all, sent an excellently painted "Head of an Arab." Harry Chase sent, among other pictures, "Dutch Barges," in his best vein, saving a rather slovenly sky; Thomas Hovenden "Old Friends" and "Hurrah," capital bits of negro character painting, and in the same line Douglas Volk had in "Contentment" a good study of the head of a mulatto woman. Most of the favorite artists were more or less creditably represented, and all of the bad ones—who appear on this annual occasion without fear of hanging committees—more or less discredibly. But in the sacred cause of charity, the latter shall be nameless.

AN excellent collection of pictures at the opening art exhibition of the season at the Lotos Club included the works of Chelminski, the Polish artist, painted in this country; several examples of Escosura, who is now in